



Town of Arlington
Department of Health and Human Services
Office of the Board of Health

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ARTIFICIAL TURF STUDY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: December 5, 2023

Meeting Time: 5PM

Location: Conducted by Remote Participation

Committee members present: Natasha Waden, Mike Gildesgame, Leslie Mayer, Joseph Barr, Jill Krajewski, Marvin Lewiton, James DiTullio, David Morgan, Joe Connolly

Agenda

I. Welcome/Introduction

Natasha Waden, Public Health Director and designee of the Health and Human Services Director, opened the meeting by introducing herself and informing all participants that they had been muted upon entering the meeting. Waden explained that only individuals on the Artificial Turf Committee would be unmuted at this meeting but that a discussion about public participation/input at future meetings would be discussed later. Waden unmuted all Committee members and asked that when called upon they introduce themselves. The following voting Committee members introduced themselves: Natasha Waden, designee for the Director of Health and Human Services; Mike Gildesgame, appointed by Conservation Commission; Leslie Mayer appointed by the Park and Recreation Commission; Joseph Barr, appointed by Capital Planning Committee; Jill Krajewski, appointed by Envision Arlington; Mavin Lewiton, appointed by Town Moderator; James Ditullio appointed by the Select Board. The following non-voting members introduced themselves: David Morgan, Environmental Planner and Conservation Agent for the Town; Joseph Connolly, Director of Recreation for the Town.

II. Review of Article 12: Establishment of "Artificial Turf Study Committee"

Natasha Waden provided a brief overview of the Article 12, highlighting the Committee's scope and charge as voted on by Town Meeting last spring. Waden explained as the designee of the Health and Human Services Director, her role was to organize the first meeting for the purpose of electing Committee Chair(s), Committee Clerk, and any other officers agreed upon by the Committee.

III. Organization of Committee

i. Election of Committee Chair(s)

Natasha Waden asked Committee members to self-nominate or make suggestions for the position of Committee Chair. Mike Gildesgame suggested

that Natasha Waden serve as Chair. Natasha thanked him, but stated she would recommend James Ditullio as Chair.

Motion made by Natasha Waden to nominate James Ditullio as Committee Chair.

2nd by Jill Krajewski .

Vote:

- Mike Gildesgame, Yes
- Leslie Mayer, Yes
- Joseph Barr, Yes
- Jill Krajewski, Yes
- Natasha Waden, Yes
- Marvin Lewiton, Yes
- James Ditullio, Abstain

Approved (6-0 with 1 Abstention)

ii. Election of Committee Clerk

James Ditullio recommended Natasha Waden for position of Committee Clerk.

Motion made by James Ditullio to nominate Natasha Waden as Committee Clerk.

2nd by Leslie Mayer

Vote:

- Mike Gildesgame Yes
- Leslie Mayer, Yes
- Joseph Barr, Yes
- Jill Krajewski, Yes
- Natasha Waden, Abstain
- Marvin Lewiton, Yes
- James Ditullio, Yes

Approved (6-0 with 1 Abstention)

iii. Election of other officers

No additional officers were elected or discussed.

IV. Discussion: Project Scope

a. Health, safety and environmental impacts

The Committee determined that this language is very broad. Therefore, the Committee agreed to discuss this in more depth at the next meeting with the intention of outlining specific health, safety and environmental impacts that should be included in these categories. A quick brainstorm of ideas included the following specifications: chemicals, mental health, physical injury, capital/financial considerations, heat impact, storm water permeability, and climate change factors. Committee members will make additional suggestions about specific topics that should fall under these categories at the next meeting.

b. Potential Mitigation Measures

The Committee agreed that identifying potential mitigation measures is not something that the group can decide upon until the research begins. Therefore, mitigation measures will be discussed at a future meeting.

c. Comparison of Artificial Turf to Natural Turf Fields

The consensus of the Committee was to utilize the same set of health, safety and environmental health categories, to be defined at the next meeting, when comparing artificial turf fields to natural turf fields.

V. Discussion: Structure of Report of Findings and Recommendations

a. Conducting Research

Committee members discussed and recognized the previous efforts made in collaboration by the Conservation Commission, Recreation Department, and Health Department, to host a public forum educating the community about Artificial Turf last spring. The Committee requested that the link to the forum be re-circulated and reviewed so that members can take this into consideration when determining what type of research should be conducted and what specific topics within the scope (health, safety, environmental impacts) should be included in the study. A point was made to indicate that the report should also include the rationale as to why or how the Committee concluded why a product, such as crumb rubber, should or should not be used. Additional discussions about the 3 month time line to complete the study/report and the feasibility of conducting testing or evaluating Arlington fields was mentioned as potential challenges. Committee members also discussed the desire/feasibility of reviewing information/data/reports that are similar in comparison to Arlington, such as field accessibility, environmental factors, climate conditions, and geographical location. To this point, there was mention of considering the development of a decision making guide or matrix as a possible tool to help evaluate or outline the site specific conditions when/if considering artificial turf field over natural turf fields. No definitive decision was made regarding the guide/matrix as the Committee acknowledged that research must be conducted first. The Committee agreed that dividing into subcommittees to conduct the necessary research and having each subcommittee report back to the larger Committee would likely be the most time efficient way to complete this work. The

Committee agreed to allow the Chair and Clerk to work together to brainstorm subcommittee topic areas which will be presented to the Committee at the next meeting.

b. Reporting Format

Committee members agreed that the report format will be determined at a later date, either during the process of conducting or evaluating the Committee's research. A brief discussion on a combination of both visual and written format was mentioned.

VI. Discussion: Project Timeline

Whereas, Town Meeting starts on April 22, 2024 and the work of this Committee must be completed and presented to the Select Board by March 22, 2024, the Committee recognized a lot of work must be done in a 3 month period. The report deadline will continue to be discussed further by the Committee with particular consideration regarding the process to be placed on the Select Board agenda.

VII. Discussion: Meeting Schedule

The Committee agreed that weekly meetings will most likely be needed given the timeline. A discussion about breaking the Committee into subcommittees to expedite efforts was of particular interest and will be further explored at the next meeting. Additionally, the meeting schedule will be discussed in more detail at the next meeting and will be dependent on the formation of smaller working groups (subcommittees), which will report back to the larger Committee.

VIII. Discussion: Public Input/Comment

The Committee agreed to accept written comments, but in the interest of time and to maintain the scope/charge of the Committee, it will not provide an opportunity for oral public comment during scheduled meetings. It was determined that written comment should be submitted and disseminated to all Committee members prior to the meetings. The specific procedure and timeline for comment submission will be developed and reviewed at the next meeting.

IX. Discussion: Next Steps

Next meeting: 12/12/23 5pm-6:30PM via Zoom

X. Adjourn

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:30PM made by Mike Gildesgame.

2nd by Marvin Lewiton

Vote:

- Mike Gildesgame, Yes
- Leslie Mayer, Yes
- Joseph Barr, Yes
- Jill Krajewski, Yes
- Natasha Waden, Yes
- Marvin Lewiton, Yes
- James Ditullio, Yes

Approved (7-0)